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Miss Carole Andrews  
Headteacher  
Horningsham Primary School  
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Warminster  
Wiltshire  
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Dear Miss Andrews

### **Short inspection of Horningsham Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 September 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in September 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You have worked tirelessly to improve the school during your tenure as headteacher. Despite the school being judged to be good in its previous three inspections, you, other staff and governors have not rested on your laurels. Instead, you continue to reflect on your practice and implement changes for the better. You hold the conviction that leadership is stronger when shared among individuals, not just embodied by the headteacher. As a result, you encourage staff and governors to use their initiative, contribute their ideas and feel valued. This means that everyone works together effectively to create a dynamic, forward-thinking institution. Your insistence on swift, collaborative action after the last inspection meant that leaders were quick to tackle the areas for improvement. As a result, pupils' handwriting and use of technical skills in their writing have improved across the school since that time.

Not only are you never satisfied that the school is as good as it can be, but you lead with cheerful optimism, integrity and a genuine love of the job. Your approach galvanises those around you to approach their work in the same way and adopt the same values. This informs a culture where pupils enjoy coming to school, understand the importance of working hard and feel that they are part of a family. As one pupil commented about school, 'It's one of the things you look forward to in the morning.' As such, school is a well-ordered, happy and vibrant place where

pupils behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are treated as equal partners, encouraged to contribute their views and participate in decision-making that affects the work of the school. For example, pupils have conducted their own self-evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development to complement leaders' self-evaluation.

The culture that you, staff and governors have created values learning. You have high expectations of all your pupils, regardless of background or ability. Teachers ensure that activities and work are suited to the interests and abilities of pupils so that they are engaged and stimulated by the work. For example, in an observed Year 2 and 3 mathematics lesson, pupils were comparing numbers to calculate which were bigger or smaller. The most able pupils were encouraged to work with three-digit numbers, whereas pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities could think up their own numbers and employ some creativity.

Pupils are known as individuals in the school. They are provided with a high level of personal support that enhances their self-esteem, increases their confidence and boosts their engagement with learning. As a result, pupils' achievement when they leave the school at the end of key stage 2 has been consistently strong in all subjects over time. However, you rightly acknowledge that more pupils should be working at greater depth across the curriculum. You also acknowledge that the progress of the most able needs to be tracked more closely to ensure that they are achieving their potential.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is taken seriously by staff and governors. You told me that the small 'family feel' of the school heightens your sense of the duty of care owed to pupils. You ensure that you have the most up-to-date knowledge of all safeguarding issues and that this is disseminated to all staff. Visitors and parents are also provided with necessary information and training. Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils are very thorough.

You recognise that a dialogue with pupils about how to keep safe is critical to effective safeguarding. They understand what constitutes an appropriate relationship between staff and pupils. You also discuss your expectations of their behaviour with them so that they are aware of how their actions affect others. As such, pupils behave in a polite, considerate way around school, sensibly navigating its many small, compact spaces. At breaktime, older pupils are on hand to help younger pupils as members of the Playground Squad. They see that 'the school's values are upheld in practice', as you put it. The pupils who spoke to the lead inspector reported that there is very little bullying in the school. One pupil commented, 'Basically, we're all friends, like a big family.' Nevertheless, if pupils are worried, they feel able to approach staff to share their concerns in the knowledge that swift and appropriate action will be taken.

The school site is secure so that visitors cannot just wander in. It is also monitored by security cameras. Procedures to check visitors to the school are robust.

## Inspection findings

- Governors share your view that they should be continually striving for improvement. As a result, they understand the importance of providing leaders with effective support and challenge. They do this by asking the right questions, using other sources of information, such as school performance data, and seeking the views of the school's improvement partner. This nurtures an open, honest culture in which areas for development are acknowledged and swiftly tackled.
- Your leadership of the school is strengthened by the expertise you offer other local institutions. Providing this expertise has sharpened your own practice and kept you abreast of key developments and innovations.
- Pupils achieve well as they progress through the school. The good level of development children achieve at the end of Reception and strong phonics achievement at the end of Year 1 provide a firm foundation for pupils' learning. As a result, pupils' achievement when they leave the school at the end of key stage 2 is in line with average, or above, in all subjects. However, you acknowledge that more pupils should be learning at greater depth across the curriculum and leaders have plans in place to address this.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in their lessons. They respond well to teachers' clear instructions and explanations. They enjoy their work because teachers devise tasks that draw on the imagination of pupils and encourage them to think and ask questions. As a result, learning is a fun and rewarding process for them.
- The most able pupils respond particularly well to tasks that challenge them to think. This results in high-quality class discussion and work that exhibits flair and individual expression. They enjoy being able to choose the 'vindaloo' extension task which moves learning on from the 'mild, hot and spicy' standard tasks in certain lessons. However, leaders do not monitor the progress of the most able sharply enough to ensure that they fully make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in the school. This is because leaders have comprehensive systems for identifying pupils' specific needs and matching bespoke provision. Pupils' progress is monitored closely and staff expectations are high. As a result, these pupils make good progress over time. This progress is visible in pupils' books. For example, it can be seen how pupils' writing develops over time. Writing becomes more controlled and uniform, incorporating better punctuation, depth of detail and narrative skill.
- The few disadvantaged pupils in the school are well known to staff, who are familiar with their needs. Additional funding is used to provide targeted teaching support and intervention programmes so that they can catch up. Consequently, they make comparable progress to their peers. Funding is also used to enable pupils to attend certain extra-curricular activities and clubs which would be

otherwise unavailable to them. For example, disadvantaged pupils recently visited Oxford University in order to raise aspirations.

- Overall attendance continues to improve. It is currently above the national average of 97%. Leaders work closely with pupils and families where attendance is too low. In these cases, leaders work effectively with the education welfare officer and other agencies. They also persist in attempts to engage with parents and apply part-time timetables when necessary. However, you rightly acknowledge that monitoring does not currently take sufficient account of the attendance of different groups of pupils.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. All respondents agree that the school is well led and managed, that their children are happy and safe, and that behaviour is well managed. They also agree that their children are well taught and make good progress. All respondents stated that they would recommend the school.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- opportunities are provided to enable pupils to work at greater depth throughout the curriculum
- aspects of monitoring are sharpened so that:
  - the most able make further progress
  - leaders are clearer about the attendance of different groups of pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Smith  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I spoke to you, pupils, representatives of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. You and I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning and we also scrutinised work in pupils' books. In addition, I listened to pupils read.

A range of documentary evidence was considered, which included the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the pupil premium report, reports from the school improvement partner, and attendance, exclusion and safeguarding records.

On inspection we pursued various lines of enquiry. We considered the effectiveness of leaders in ensuring that different groups of pupils make the progress of which they are capable. We also focused upon the extent to which leaders' actions are effective in ensuring that reading and writing achievement is strong throughout the school. Furthermore, we considered the effectiveness of safeguarding and actions to reduce absence for pupils.